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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews literature on leadership education, including empowerment of individuals with disabilities. The emphasis in early leadership research was on leadership "traits," reflecting the belief that leaders are born, not made. Subsequently research viewed leadership as the outcome of both situational and personal factors, and their interactions. Leadership education then began to assume that leaders are made, and currently focuses on factors that are amenable to development. Leadership training should focus on understanding one's inner abilities and dreams, conceptualizing what leaders actually do, and behavioral modeling. Other issues that leadership training should deal with include the importance of understanding the power relations within educational institutions; the differences in institutional cultures and the barriers that student leaders may face; the way institutions view student activism and the impact on leadership development; and the efforts of educational institutions to grapple with diversity, including students with disabilities. The paper concludes that leadership training for people with disabilities should address issues of cultural identity, to strengthen both the individual with the disability and the disability community. (Contains 15 references.) (CR)

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Leadership Education: A Review

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Leadership Education: A Review

While leadership as a social and psychological phenomenon has been studied empirically for nearly a century, attention has only recently been given to leadership education. A glance at the leadership literature before the 1940s suggests one reason why this is so: The emphasis in this research was on leadership "traits", reflecting the belief that leaders are born, not made. The cultural assumptions directing this research were that leaders were superior individuals who possessed leadership abilities due to inheritance or exposure to challenging social experiences (Stogdill, 1981, p. 73). Leadership education as an applied area of research was not likely to flourish until this paradigm waned.

In his review of 124 studies of leadership traits, Stogdill (1948) found that leaders were characterized by six clusters of traits: capacity, achievement, responsibility, participation, status, and situation. In this framework, *capacity* consists of intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality, and judgment. *Achievement* includes scholarship, knowledge, and athletic accomplishments. *Responsibility* encompasses dependability, initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, self-confidence, and desire to excel. *Participation* involves activity, sociability, cooperation, adaptability, and humor. *Status* refers to socio-economic position and popularity. *Situation* includes mental level, status, needs and interests of followers, objectives to be achieved, etc.

In a 1970 follow-up review, Stogdill found that leaders are characterized by a strong drive for responsibility and task completion, "drive" to take social initiative, motivation and facility for problem-solving, self-confidence and sense of personal identity, motivation to accept responsibility for consequences of decisions and actions, high tolerance threshold for frustration and delay, readiness to cope with interpersonal stress, ability to influence other people's behavior, and capacity to structure the social interaction context to meet group goals.

Stogdill's (1948) review was instrumental in weakening the dominance of the trait approach to studying leadership. In his review, Stogdill concluded, "It becomes clear that an adequate analysis of leadership involves not only a study of leaders, but also of situations. The

evidence suggests that leadership is a relation that exists between persons in a social situation, and that persons who are leaders in one situation may not necessarily be leaders in other situations."

He suggests that leaders and followers may serve in either role as a function of the situation. However, Stogdill observes that leadership and nonleadership patterns of behavior are persistent and relatively stable. A factor that may be of more importance in assessing the leadership potential of a person is whether she or he is incapable or unwilling to either lead or follow; that is, if she or he is 'indifferent' versus socially engaged. Ultimately, leadership should be viewed as the outcome of both situational and personal factors, and their interactions.

Given the general impracticability of determining the source of personal, highly stable factors involved in leadership, leadership training has understandably focused on factors that are viewed as amenable to development, and assumes (to a significant extent) that "leaders are made". According to this perspective, however, even leadership factors that could be considered to be inherited are generally fostered by training. Consistent with an interactionist view of nature-nurture, the argument is that such factors may be latent until their potential is activated by appropriate development.

Leaders may develop their potential through life experience. For example, people may emulate the behavior of a successful leader (e.g., confidence, or communicating inspirationally) by practicing it in different situations until they are skilled at that behavior themselves. But this is a haphazardous process, depending on the opportunity to learn by chance. Leadership education involves the formalizing of these opportunities that would otherwise be gained by luck alone.

Conger has developed a set of factors he believes should be included in leadership training, based on results from a variety of recent leadership training approaches that he reviews (Conger, 1992). Leadership training that emphasize personal growth became popular in the 1980s. These programs assumed that leaders are people in touch with their personal desires and talents, who will act to fulfill them. So, efforts at leadership training involved getting people to understand their inner abilities and dreams. They used psychological exercises and outdoor-adventure activities to achieve these aims, and to teach participants to take responsibility for their situations. The

formulation of a personally meaningful vision is also a task in this type of approach.

Another approach to leadership training is more conceptual in nature. This approach is taught primarily at colleges and universities, and consists of studies of what leaders actually do, with attention given to the contingencies involved in leadership. These programs employ lecture, case studies, limited skill-building and feedback (Conger, 1992).

Bass (1981) reviews a behavioral modeling approach that involves observing (in a film) supervisors dealing with a variety of situations, followed by group discussion of how effectively the supervisors acted. Then, participants role-play the desired behaviors in front of their training group, and receive feedback on their performance. Latham and Saari (1979) found that this type of training resulted in superior job performance evaluations over those of the control group a year later.

Conger (1992) is optimistic that leadership skills can be taught, even in the short period of a week. However, he argues that to be effective, the training must combine the strengths of the various approaches to training that have been employed, such that the training program serves to 1) develop or refine skills that are teachable, 2) improve the conceptual abilities of the participants, 3) tap the personal needs, interests, and self-esteem of the participants because of the relevance of these personal aspects to leaders' motivation to lead and to formulate a vision, and 4) help participants move beyond their interpersonal blocks. Leadership training could formalize the development of skills: Opportunities could be provided during the course of the training to practice a set of leadership skills in "hands-on" sessions. Conceptual abilities are far more complex to teach in leadership workshops, but exercises designed to develop strategic problem-solving skills with examples that concern disability access and awareness in a variety of educational/business/bureaucratic contexts may be of value.

Another aspect of conceptual ability, according to Conger (1992), is to know how to be and act like a leader. Leadership training could develop awareness about this dimension. Training could address the needs, interests, and self-esteem of the participants by helping them clarify the status of each, and link the importance of these to leadership vision and drive. Finally, leadership

training could heighten participants' awareness of needs that could impede their efforts to lead; for example, ineffective interpersonal behaviors could compromise a leader's ability to motivate followers. Conger asserts that training that provides opportunities to learn, try out, and receive feedback about their status in these areas could be highly effective.

In addition to the above considerations, the goals of a particular leadership training program need to be taken into account. Leadership education that has as its goal long-term social change must consider societal and organizational aspects that may affect the ability of people receiving leadership training to implement desired changes. For example, student leaders seeking to achieve changes in their institution need to attend to barriers that may interfere with their efforts. In addition to this, institutions that are grappling with the incorporation of diversity need to understand their role in empowering student leaders to effect desired changes in the institution. The nature of the educational institution is important, as college and universities are considered to be a primary environment for the development of future leaders who will seek social change (Lassey and Sashkin, 1983).

An understanding of the power relations within the institution is also important, as it has implications for the potential of an institution to empower its students. Kreisberg (1992) argues that student-teacher relationships are characterized by domination rather than empowerment. Although the focus of his discussion is on primary and secondary educational settings, his arguments still largely apply at the post-secondary level. The types of interactions that take place in college classrooms are often directive, in which teachers have *power over* relationships in the classroom rather than *power with* students. Kreisberg (1992) argues that overcoming the traditionally dominant mode of interaction is crucial in creating an empowering environment for students.

Institutions have their own cultures, which are generally threatened by the prospect of change. When an institutional culture undergoes change, everyday activities, rituals and symbols of the organization can be altered, stripped down, or thrown out altogether, potentially leaving those who work in the institution confused and angry. Reshaping the culture of an institution

means different tasks and asking different questions on a daily basis. This kind of deep-seated change can take a long time to make, particularly if the institutional culture is strong (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). An understanding of the nature of these institutional cultures is important in determining the barriers that student leaders may face when their efforts involve those cultures.

Smith (1989) discusses the issues involved with the efforts of educational institutions to grapple with diversity. She finds that the institutions that are most successful in incorporating diversity focus on students' success; coordinate their efforts with community colleges, high schools, and primary schools; allocate energy and resources to creating a nurturant environment; and includes faculty and administrators who provide strong direction. Among the factors she believes are important for organizing for diversity are the missions and values of the institution, the extent to which they educate for diversity, and the diversity among the faculty and staff (Smith, 1989).

Increasingly, institutions are acknowledging the need to address diversity concerns on their campuses, and are committing themselves to greater inclusion. This is promising for student leaders working on diversity issues. The verbal and written commitments of institutions, often backed up by at least one administrator who is charged with implementing relevant policies, can pave the way for cooperation between students and administrators and achieving the changes needed. If there is less than active commitment on the part of the institution, mission statements can at least be used as leverage in fighting for accommodation.

The way that the institution views student activism can reflect and impact not only the achievement of the students' immediate goals, but the development of their leadership development (Chambers and Phelps, 1993). Chambers and Phelps argue that administrators should view student activism as a positive, developmental activity that prepares students for leadership roles, and enriches the students' academic experience. If the institution views activists' activities as chaotic and unacceptable unless it is channeled through approved campus organizations, this could reflect resistance against any change that might influence organizational behavior, suggesting a lack of readiness to accommodate student perspectives and needs.

The movement toward acknowledging diversity on the part of educational institutions invites hope that people will eventually find the campus environment more accessible. But a greater understanding of factors that inhibit full access for members of various groups will need to be developed. For example, Fuertes and Sedlacek (1993) examined barriers to leadership development of Hispanics in higher education. They asserted the need for student affairs professionals to become aware of some of the problems that Hispanic students experience, and to tailor leadership training to acknowledge cultural differences in assertiveness and other behaviors relevant to leadership.

Similar concerns apply to the empowerment of disabled students on college campuses. Awareness of the physical, attitudinal, and other social barriers that interfere with full access for people with disabilities requires that the institution be able to listen to those concerns, and view disabled students as potential agents of change. A successful partnership between administrators and disabled students can not only result in campus access, but in an empowerment of disabled students that transfers to settings outside of academia. This empowerment is particularly crucial in the context of efforts to implement the Americans with Disabilities Act (Bowe, 1992). Disabled leaders will press for enforcement of the act, increasing the likelihood that the next generation of people with disabilities will have fewer barriers to access to fight.

The organizational context where access is sought is socially constructed, and can be influenced by the shared vision of disabled leaders of a fully-inclusive society. Vision is a dynamic quality of leadership that has significant power to effect new thinking and new ideas (Astin and Leland, 1991). In an ideal context, the institution would work with emerging disabled student leaders to articulate a larger vision of Disability rights, culture, community, and pride. Schieve and Schoenheit (1987) discuss how a vision may be realized: by developing the vision, owning it, making it public, developing strategies, and mobilizing people to carry out those strategies.

Vision may be considered a foundational skill that inspires future action (Nanus, 1992). Roueche, Baker, and Rose (1989) argue that "visions are only the seedlings of reality" (p. 289)

unless efforts to realize the visions are made in a cooperative rather than a directive manner. Disability culture, and the community it promotes, provide a source of shared vision that can strengthen and contextualize efforts of disabled leaders to gain access. Disability identity can facilitate the expression of a larger vision, and the shared identity within the disability community can provide the cooperative networks needed to carry out that vision.

Conger (1992) lists a set of issues that he asserts are important to successful leadership training. In addition to these, leadership training for disabled people should address issues of cultural identity, to strengthen both the disabled individual and the disability community. As Sue Kroeger asserts, to lead, you have to know who you are. Leadership education for disabled people can help to strengthen self-awareness in ways that will benefit both the participants in the training program itself, and the larger disability community as well.

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